MORE READING FOR THE BLIND

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comings in this world have been, 'Old Jake' will need no judge's commitment to get 'within the walls' of heaven."

More than 20 per cent. of Sing Sing prison population served the nation's flag in the World War, and the warden would stake his life on the courage of hundreds of them. Moreover, prisoners quickly recognize merit and give credit to deserving fellow prisoners, we are told, and a thief in prison is despised by prisoners committed for theft; capital punishment is strongly upheld by men imprisoned for murder. "How do they square this attitude with their own crime?"

"Simple! Their acts were not crimes to their way of thinking. "'I believe you are here for larceny, aren't you?' I asked a prisoner who complained that his fountain-pen (later found just where he had left it) had been stolen.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'but I didn't really steal nothing. I had spent a lot of money on this girl, so when she gave me the go-by, I keeps her ring and sells it, and didn't get back near what I had spent on her.' . . .

"Several prisoners have contended that they had done no more than is being done by 'big business' every day, and that 'stealing is good business when a man succeeds and is larcency only when he fails.' . . .

"An Italian prisoner once said to me: 'When the war come, I go make a fight and kill Germans who never hurt me at all. For this I get a medal. Then I come home and this man, he slacker, ruin my sister. Now the judge he say I must do twenty years. I maybe make a murder in war, but I no make a murder to kill this snake.'"

Crime is rarely a one-sided proposition, Warden Lawes contends:

"Guilt is rarely entirely personal. Responsibility must, in most instances, be shared by society, which takes credit for a man's virtues and should by the same token acknowledge at least some of the blame for his vices. The newspapers and movies must, in many instances, share a good deal of the responsibility of crime, but so too must the schools, the churches, and many thoughtless fathers, indulgent mothers, vain wives, underpaying employers, dishonest politicians, usurious bankers, and grasping

serious challenge to us in forcing us to provide a much more widespread campaign of instruction than we have given in the past. The need for our laity to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them would be greater than ever, the damage which an indifferent or poorly instructed Catholic could do would be incalculably larger, and it would be imperative that there be as few such as possible.

"The answer that 'the priest told me so,' which has become very passé even now, would suffice even less than it does, and our sermons and our school instructions could not afford to be oblivious of the fact that we have about us an intelligent, but undogmatic, people, with whom we would have to begin at the very beginning, and who would take no statement as to the necessity of a teaching Church unless we could abundantly prove it to them. It is hard enough as it is; it would be infinitely harder once the really representative Christianity of the country was definitely committed to the opposite thesis."

The "not altogether pleasing" topic of political influence is another phase of a combination of major denominations that "opens up a none-too-inviting prospect," we read:

"Tho Church and State are supposed to be entirely separate in our land, the fact that the 'churches' do exercise an enormous influence in the State is one which can not be denied. Despite a certain loss of authority, the pulpit is still a factor in determining the attitude of our people toward many questions which are not, strictly speaking, religious. There is a cohesion of thought among Protestants of certain denominations which is entirely lacking among Catholics, and the difference is due to the fact that political or politico-moral questions are usually absent from the Catholic pulpit, whereas they form no small part of the discourses of non-Catholic preachers. In some denominations this is due to a certain extent to direct suggestions from 'headquarters,' and it seems to be reasonable to assume that a body such as this proposed merger contemplates would be very apt to adopt a similar policy. It would be most unfortunate if it assumed such proportions as to force upon Catholics the taking of any steps in similar direction. Nothing more disastrous could be conceived, to my mind, than the formation of any sort of 'Catholic party' in our political system, or having any party dominated by Catholics. We have kept free of such entanglements, and certainly we desire to do so, but this plan opens up a none inviting prospect in this field. There is a movement, cro

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out now and then, which is designed to secure some sort of recognition for Protestantism as an official religion for the United States. Signs of such a movement appear here and there, and occasionally, one bolder than the rest will openly avow such an intention. The formation of a single denomination, comprising thirty-five or forty million persons, could be made a most powerful instrument in furthering such a scheme. So it is quite within the range of possibility that it may be made the means of seriously menacing not only the numerical leadership of the Catholic Church (which is of small importance) but of hindering its work of promoting the religious welfare both of its own members and of those 'other sheep' who need its ministrations."

MORE READING FOR THE BLIND

VOLUNTEER BRAILLE TRANSCRIBERS—more than nine hundred certified workers—are serving to produce fresh reading material for the blind, and Lions Clubs have taken the lead among the service organizations in financing production of new Braille books. These practical developments of social service for the blind in the United States are described in the pages of *The Outlook for the Blind*, published by the American Foundation for the Blind, New York. The first volunteer Braille transcriber for war-blinded soldiers was Mrs. Margaret H. Forgan of Baltimore, we are told. She learned how to make the Braille characters with a stylus at the Library of Congress in the summer of 1918, and was soon able to produce readable copies of editorials from *Collier's*, articles from THE LITERARY DIGEST, and other magazines. These she sent to the Evergreen training school, and after that institution was closed all copies "that had survived hard usage" were transferred to the Library of Congress for general circulation, where, we read, "the eagerness and delight of the general reader in this new literature fully justified this form of volunteer service." To-day Braille transcribing "stands unique among the other agencies for the blind in this country," according to Adelia M. Hoyt, acting director of Braille of the American Red Cross at the Library of Congress, who writes of the growth of this volunteer service. We summarize some interesting details:

The roll of more than nine hundred certified workers represents one hundred and forty-nine Red Cross chapters throughout the country and includes other organizations such as women's clubs, church societies, Junior League. In cooperation with the Library of Congress a small staff is maintained; office room, franking privilege, and other facilities are freely granted. Text-books on transcribing and proof-reading are now available. Two correspondence courses are conducted—one for sighted transcribers, the other for blind proof-readers. After a worker receives a certificate and is given permission to transcribe, her work is carefully supervised, the manuscript proof-read, corrected, shellacked and made up into proper volumes before it is presented to a library.

Concerning the output of transcriptions we read that more than one hundred volumes per month are now completed and presented to various libraries:

"They represent a wide range of literature: history, philosophy, biography, poetry, and fiction. All that any transcriber requires is the knowledge that a certain book is wanted by a library or blind reader, and she is willing to undertake it. Perfection is not claimed for these volumes, but many readers testify to the high standard of accuracy maintained."

Since the cost of binding hand-copied manuscript is almost prohibitive to many libraries, volunteer bookbinding has been taken up by various Red Cross chapters, the Brooklyn chapter being cited as the pioneer in this service.

Besides copying books, volunteers, have furnished Braille material for blind students in colleges, schools, in business, and professions. In the Braille service office it is stated that, only two sighted employees receive any remuneration. All other paid workers are without sight. About forty such persons, including proof-readers, instructors, and supervisors, are now receiving more or less regular compensation from the Red Cross. In the growing volunteer service work, Director Hoyt points out that—

"Braillists become interested in the local blind, serve on committees, help with clubs and associations of the blind. They seek out children and newly blinded, and these are put in touch with schools, commissions, and home teachers. Sometimes they are taught by the volunteers. Christmas cards, booklets, marked playing cards, Braille letters, and many other expressions of friendship and good-will now pass from the transcriber to touch readers, for the volunteer loves this personal touch.

"Thus has Braille transcribing helped to enrich the libraries, aided the students and been a means of educating the public to a better understanding of the blind and their problems."

Valuable additions to the supply of Braille books are being constantly made through contributions by the Lions Clubs to the Memorial Embossing Fund Library of the American Foundation for the Blind. This now includes thirty Braille volumes. The Government permits these books to go through the mail free of postage. Contributions cover the initial cost of the plates, printing and binding of fourteen copies, distributed to public libraries with departments for the blind, and containing inserts giving the name of the donor. Libraries may also secure additional copies as needed. A recent list of these new Braille books financed by Lions Clubs and similar service club organizations reveals the character of reading thus made available for the blind:

NEW YORK: Mt. Vernon, "The Girls"—Ferber; New Rochelle, "When You Write a Letter"—Clark; South Shore, Staten Island, "The Little Book of Modern Verse"—Rittenhouse; Tuckahoe, "The Rajah's Diamonds"—Stevenson; White Plains, "A Man of Property"—Galsworthy; Yonkers, "Awakening," "To Let"—Galsworthy; The Bronx, N. Y. C., "The Thundering Herd"—Zane Grey.

LONG ISLAND: Hempstead and Garden City, "In Chancery"—Galsworthy; Hollis, "The Ebb Tide"—Stevenson; Port Washington, "Lady into Fox"—Garnett; Woodhaven, "A Venetian June"—Fuller.

CONNECTICUT: Greenwich, "My Story That I Like Best"—(various authors).

NEW JERSEY: Montclair, "The Hunter's Moon"—Poole; Passaic, "Johnny Blossom"—Zwilgmeyer.

WASHINGTON, D. C.: "The Song of the Stone Wall," "My Key of Life" (Optimism), "The World I Live In," "Out of the Dark"—Helen Keller.

JUNIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY STATE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS: "The Promises of Dorothea"—Margaret Deland.

JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB OF PATERSON, NEW JERSEY: "O Pioneers!"—Willa S. Cather.

Photograph by the American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., New York

READING A BRAILLE BOOK

City in 1925. Of this total, only 5,622 were indicted, and only 1,178 were committed to Sing Sing.

"Society not only fails to catch and convict the 'big fellows,' who too often set the example or provide the incentive for the 'little fellows,' but it also blunders inexcusably in its handling of the convicted criminals. Some of these it kills—according to the old rule of 'an eye for an eye'—the others it punishes with imprisonment, varying the dose by the crime and at the whim of a judge who often knows little of practical penology. No concerted effort is made at either prevention or correction, and the result is that new criminals are being continuously created, and the old ones made worse, by unwise and often unjust treatment."

The criminality of law violation arises from human impulses that are "neither good nor bad in themselves but only in relation to other things," this prison warden observes. In handling more than 10,000 "bad" men, he has found himself faced with an equal number of paradoxes and anomalies. "The gunman-murderer in most instances proves to be tender-hearted; the bold robber, timid; the thief, honest." In work, "prisoners willingly return a great deal more to the prison and its management than is given them—be they gunmen or confidence tricksters." Many of them give themselves unsparingly and unselfishly to teaching or social service for fellow prisoners. For example:

"A call for volunteers to furnish blood for a transfusion invariably brings a large number of men who have absolutely nothing to gain thereby—not even an extra portion at the next meal. . . .

"'Old Jake'—who is a sort of assistant to every worker in the hospital—is now doing his eighth 'bit.' has spent most of his life

"MENACE" OF A METHODIST MERGER

WARNING AGAINST POSSIBLE EFFECTS of the recent Methodist General Conference overtures for merging not only Methodist bodies but also Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, appears in the New York *Truth* (Roman Catholic) from the pen of Floyd Keeler. With dogma out of the way, practically no distinction in modes of worship, the form of ministry a secondary consideration, and business men as backers who urge the advantages of getting together, the writer thinks that in all probability the merger will take place in the course of a few years. This directly concerns Catholics in a number of ways, according to Mr. Keeler, who writes that the first thing to note is "that should such a merger be accomplished, the resultant organization would be by far the largest religious body in the United States."

"It would have approximately twice the number of adherents which are credited to the Catholic Church, which now occupies the place of preeminence. We may not feel that this concerns us, for while we naturally take a certain pride in the Church's growth and numbers, her being the largest religious body in the country is by no means essential to her welfare, and might even be detrimental to her. But there is another angle to the situation. Such an organization, represented as it would be in every part of the country, in city, village, and rural districts, would be the means of contenting people with a form of so-called Christianity more utterly at variance with the Catholic ideal than any number of separate sects, founded on a positive basis, would give. It would tend to place positive doctrine outside the pale of thought of our people, and the constant contact of Catholics with this notion would make more difficult the impressing them with the impor-

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